

CRISTIN TIERNEY

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

Five Artists to Watch at This Week's Art Basel Miami Beach

Among the hottest artists at this week's contemporary art show: Jose Dávila, Wardell Milan, Fritzia Irizar, Yto Barrada and Harold Ancart



Dealer Cristin Tierney brought nine historic videos by Peter Campus and said she hoped a museum would buy the set for \$30,000. The artist has a show scheduled for Paris's Jeu de Paume in 2017. *NOAH RABINOWITZ FOR THE WALL STREET JOURNAL*

By **KELLY CROW**

Dec. 3, 2015 6:01 p.m. ET

At Art Basel Miami Beach this week, jet-set collectors like Abdullah Al-Turki from Saudi Arabia and Alia Al-Senussi from Libya commingled with celebrities like singer Alicia Keys, director Brett Ratner and actress Hilary Swank.

CRISTIN TIERNEY

The artsy, casual environment, which serves as a counterpoint to New York's high-stakes fall auctions, provides collectors an opportunity to spot fresh art trends and discover up-and-coming artists—including the five listed below—who could potentially turn blue chip one day.

Although prices for works at the main fair, which runs through Sunday, stretch to \$18 million for an Andy Warhol portrait of starlet Marilyn Monroe, the majority of offerings hover below seven figures. Some artworks in the roughly 20 satellite fairs fanning across the city can be bought for as little as \$1,000.

That's good news for collectors keeping a wary eye on the art market overall, which appears to be hitting a plateau after several seasons of skyrocketing prices. During Wednesday's VIP preview, dealers said collectors felt comfortable splurging on pieces under \$500,000, but booths weren't selling out in a blur like they were several years ago. One dealer said she was "freaking out" after failing to sell a single piece on the first day.

Some dealers braced for a slowdown by offering artists who seem like safe bets: The mangled sculptures and rainbow-color canvases of Frank Stella, who has a current retrospective at the Whitney Museum of American Art, popped up in at least five booths, as did Mel Bochner's cheery word paintings. New York's Pace Gallery had a hit with Louise Nevelson, a sculptor it has represented since 1963. The gallery sold 16 of her black assemblages for between \$75,000 and \$1 million apiece on Wednesday.

New York's David Zwirner Gallery also sold mainstay artist Sherrie Levine's new bronze sculpture of a "Beach Ball after Lichtenstein" for \$450,000, and Swiss gallery Hauser & Wirth sold Paul McCarthy's black walnut sculpture, "White Snow, Dopey, Black Red White," for \$1.5 million.

Dealer Peter Freeman said a U.S. museum had also put a hold on artist Jimmie Durham's \$1 million "Still Life with Xitle and Spirit" from 2007, a 9.5-ton volcanic rock sitting atop a crushed Chrysler sedan. (The artist painted googly eyes and a grin on one section of the boulder.)

CRISTIN TIERNEY

Popular themes this time around included natural history—with specimen-like works featuring feathers, bones, stingrays and painted rocks—as well as works that rely on digital gadgets like 3-D printers.

Germano Celant, a curator who helped select pieces for Swiss gallery Gmurzynska's salon-style booth, said it's difficult—but still possible—to make artistic discoveries in this saturated marketplace. His litmus test? "If it bothers me or it disturbs me, I stop. Then it becomes interesting," he said.

Here's a closer look at five younger artists who drew raves from collectors and curators at the main fair.

JOSE DÁVILA

Fifteen minutes. That's all the time it took Wednesday for Mexico's Galeria OMR to sell four pieces by Guadalajara-based artist Jose Dávila, known for his wry reinterpretations of his artistic heroes like Roy Lichtenstein. In "Untitled (M-maybe)," Mr. Dávila recreated one of the Pop master's comic-style paintings of a woman—but then Mr. Dávila cut out the woman's face, thereby making her absence more intriguing. It sold for \$35,000. New York's Sean Kelly Gallery and Copenhagen's Galleri Nicolai Wallner also sold two of Mr. Dávila's \$45,000 sculptures of tilted marble slabs held upright by ratchet straps, a configuration that evokes Richard Serra on the fly.

WARDELL MILAN

Over the past decade, Tennessee-born artist Wardell Milan has gained a reputation for wielding an X-ACTO knife like a surgeon, cutting around photographs of boxers and buxom women so that their flailing limbs appear to jump out at viewers or get pasted in oddly mesmerizing reconfigurations. Currently, MoMAPS1 is exhibiting a few of his portraits in its survey show, "Greater New York." Mr. Milan also has a lush, painterly side, as evidenced by a trio of new tulip paintings he unveiled at David Nolan's booth. All sold for \$14,000 each on Wednesday.

YTO BARRADA

CRISTIN TIERNEY

Art fairs are good places to catch up on international rising stars you might otherwise overlook. Moroccan artist Yto Barrada has an exhibit of photographs and installations called “Faux Guide” at the Carré d’Art in Nîmes, France, meant to collectively evoke a natural-history museum. Her “museum” is similar to one that was planned by Morocco’s colonial overseers in the 1920s and never opened. Now, Pace Gallery is offering a set of untitled photographs at its booth for \$60,000 that Ms. Barrada took of painted education signboards intended for the museum in the Moroccan town of Azilal. The images feature colorful volcanos, tectonic plates and hillside stratifications.

HAROLD ANCART

Recently, this Belgian artist drove from New York to Los Angeles and back again in a car, using his trunk like a studio and drawing whatever he came across. His cheerful wanderlust—and surreal landscapes—are now proving infectious with collectors and curators alike. Museums like the Museum of Modern Art and the Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles already own his colorful, deceptively simple oilstick drawings. David Kordansky Gallery sold one of Mr. Ancart’s flowery still lifes to a U.S. collector for \$40,000 on Wednesday.

FRITZIA IRIZAR

Art Basel Miami Beach is known for championing artists from Latin America, and Miami collector Dan Gelfman said his fair favorite was Mexican artist Fritzia Irizar, whose installation, “Untitled (The Disappearance of the Symbol),” was still available Thursday for \$25,000 at the booth of Mexican gallery Arredondo\Arozarena. Ms. Irizar used gold thread to weave a Phrygian cap—a slouchy hat that symbolizes liberty on Mexican currency. The artist then set up an elaborate series of gears around the booth that will gradually tug at the hat, pulling it apart, Rube Goldberg-style. By fair’s end, the hat will disappear into a tight, unremarkable spool. Dealer Andres Arredondo said the artist wanted to explore the tension between money and freedom in her homeland.